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Segarini and the Dudes: Riding high at last

The Dudes: From left, Wayne Cullen, Kootch Trochim, Bob Segarini, Brian Greenway, Ritchie Henman and David Henman.

Rock & Pop

by Juan Rodriguez

Bog Segarini does not disguise the fact that he lives for rock 'n' roll. He's been playing it for 16 years, he says, since the age of 10.

The Stockton, Calif., native saw his group The Wackers attain a cult-status in the world of rock, but never break through with a big hit, and the group died a slow death during a cold Montreal winter. Now he's on the eve of his first album release with a new band, the Dudes, and he's happy again.

He tells the story of the day he got his advance from the record company. He hired a limousine to ride around town in while he paid out cheques for debts amounting to $12,000 incurred during the two years the fate of his rock 'n' roll bands was in the balance.

BEER IN HAND

Segarini answers the door of his funky low-rent NDG duplex with beer in hand. He wears cut-off jeans, silk knee-high stockings, and track shoes. He's got a computerized digital watch, and a white turn-of-the-century telephone, and his curly black hair flows in an exaggerated pompadour that suggests a number of rock 'n' roll hair styles over the years.

There's an impromptu gathering to send off Randy Bishop, Segarini's old partner in crime in the Wackers, as he heads back to Los Angeles to search for a record contract. Kootch Trochim, another Wacker and now a Dude, and Jack August, of Moonquake, and session musicians Marty Harris and Chris Castle, are all in attendance. There is a bottle of cognac and gin, beers, a couple of joints making the rounds, as well as a photocopy of an article in a L.A. music paper on the Dudes and a Montreal magazine.

"I love this city," beamed Segarini. "I keep waitin for the honeymoon to be over but it never stops. Look, I got a roomful of tremendous musicians. Now I've lived in L.A. and spent time in New York, Detroit, and San Francisco, and there aren't anywhere near as many good musicians with good ideas as there are here. Plus, the scene is one of survival. If you can survive here, you come out of it real swell. But it's very difficult because there's no place to play and times are tough."

He brought out a print of the Dudes' first album cover, which depicts the sextet dwarfed amidst hundreds of golden stylized electric guitars.

Segarini has waited a long time for something like this. He had to live down to ignomity of having the old record company turn down the last Wackers album, Wack 'n' Roll, after having invested $75,000 in studio costs.

BIG SUCCESS

"We spent almost three years trying to successfully translate our basic live sound onto record, then the company pulled the rug from under us."

"I was real depressed," he noted.

"I mean, the Wackers were a year ahead of their time right down the line" (referring to group's ability to assimilate numerous top styles before others did the same).

"When we broke up I was pretty confused, grabbed a coupla guys and tried to keep going.

"Wayne Cullen, the drummer, was one and driving back from Toronto one night we got to figuring the ideal band we'd like to be in. We came up with Kootch on bass, Ritchie Henman on drums along with Wayne, and three guitars: myself, David Henman and Brian Greenway." (These last three familiar on on the local rock scene with April Wine, Cheeque, and other bands.)

The group's first gig together took place at Café Campus, a strange place for the bulwarks of the English-Montreal rock scene to attract a standing room only crowd.

"I still have a poster," recalls Segarini. "We were still called 'The Band With No Name'. The crowd was mostly French-speaking and they really got off on us."

Then it was off to a week at the Edgewater Hotel, which subsequently stretched into five weeks.

It was here that the genesis of the Dudes, shiney new recording contract took place. Segarini's friend Gary Sperazza, the editor of an underground newspaper out of Buffalo, came into town to hang out for some local color for an issue of his paper devoted to the Montreal rock scene.

NO QUALMS

The issue eventually was read by a young producer, Marc Spector, from Columbia in New York, who immediately flew up to check the Dudes out. Once he signed the group, Spector took them to Le Studio, in Morin Heights, P.Q., where recording started in May.

"It took exactly a year," says Segarini.

"It's all been worth it. Sure, we had our phone yanked out, and the TV repossessed. There were other things we could've done, but if you're gonna do something you've gotta dive in, sink or swim. You can't divide your time doing jingles and commercials and working as a studio musician. You gotta forsake the security of that to get the job done."

Which is why Segarini has no qualms about hiring a limousine for the day to escort a visiting writer from Billboard, the No. 1 trade publication. He also likes to tell you that Columbia is putting out an EP (extended play) disc, containing four songs, for radio stations only, "the first time Columbia's done it in years."

And now the Dudes are at last going out on tour, to coincide with the release of the album on Sept. 19. They play nine dates on the Bee Gees Canadian tour (including the Forum on Oct. 1) then do some promotional work, and on Nov. 1 embark on a month-long (25 concerts) swing "east of the Mississippi."

Segarini, his beer replenished, looks contentedly at his living room where musicians and friends are sitting quietly around the stereo listening reverentially to Rubert Holmes' ode to the Session Man, as well as Dudes tapes and some demos Segarini and Bishop had worked on ("Not many people realize that me and Randy have been recording together after all this time," said Segarini guardedly).

"We meet nothing but nice people now," he said. "We've started dealing in a strata of the music industry where you meet really fine folks. You don't meet the jivetalkers, you start dealing with people who are seriously concerned with whether or not you're gonna do something."

Local artist exhibits in N. Z.

AUCKLAND, N.Z. — (CP) — A Canadian artist has established a foothold in an unusual market — New Zealand. His one-man show in Auckland has aroused a good deal of interest, partly because shows by Canadian artists in this part of the world are rare.

An exhibition at the John Leech Gallery by David Silverberg was classed as successful by the gallery management, particularly for an artist unknown locally. About 25 works were sold.

The exhibition was opened by A. P. Smythe, first secretary at the Canadian High Commission in New Zealand, who expressed the hope that the venture would encourage art exchanges between the two countries.

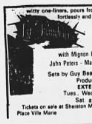
Aged 39, Silverberg was born in Montreal and furthered his art studies in Canada, France, London, Japan and Peru. After holding a number of art teaching posts, he was appointed an associate professor at Mount Allison University in Sackville, N.B.

In a review of the exhibition, the art critic of New Zealand Herald, T. J. McNamara, said:

"Delicately tinted lovers ensnared in flowers are the principal subjects of the sweet, highly competent prints by the Canadian artist David Silverberg.

"All his prints have a rather precious charm which is at its best in the unforced images of lovers among flowers ... and least effective when he is forcing the meaning in a print such as Chanson Marine, full of fish and flute-playing females.

"The degree of professional competence Mr. Silverberg has as a print maker is seen in the swept sky and cold atmosphere of Before Dawn, a print full of the cold North."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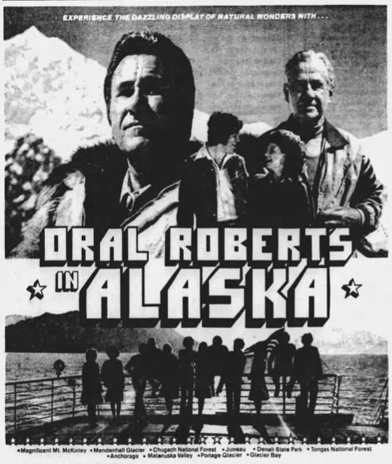

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